

Different Gifts, But the Same Spirit

DIRECTOR'S GUIDE

Introduction

The Director of Religious Education at a large suburban parish tells of a lesson she learned about inclusion one Sunday afternoon. Her parish had a food drive at Thanksgiving time. On the Sunday after Thanksgiving, signs were posted and announcements were made inviting anyone who wanted to help pack food to meet in the parish hall at 2 p.m. Shortly after 2 p.m., as the DRE was helping to organize a small group of volunteers, in walked three young men who happened to have disabilities. They all lived near the church and attended Mass there every weekend. Wrongly assuming the men were food recipients only, the DRE rushed up to tell them to go home and wait for the food to be delivered.

Puzzled, they pointed to the sign that read, "Everyone welcome to help pack food boxes," and one man asked, "It says 'everyone.' Didn't you mean us? Can we help?"

When she told this story at a recent DRE meeting, she remarked, "This experience has made me look at giving and receiving very differently!"



Sometimes the people we perceive to be the neediest can be the most gifted of all!"

Before You Distribute These Materials

Look over all the lesson plans and student pages and decide how your parish will use these materials. Some parishes may choose to present the material in conjunction with Inclusion Sunday, as a preparation for the day or on the day itself.

Notice that the family lesson is printed so that a mailing label can be attached. Decide how to best distribute the lesson to families in your school or parish program.

This series of lesson plans, developed by Pathways.org in partnership with the Archdiocese of Chicago, is provided to help your house of faith or religious school teach families and students in grade four through high school about the gifts received when people of all abilities are welcomed as active participants.

If at all possible, have a meeting with your catechists/teachers to introduce or review the concept of inclusion several weeks before you plan to use these materials.

Meeting Plan

1. If your parish has a copy of the 25-minute *Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors* video or DVD (check your parish library or see the following resource list), use the video as an introduction to discussing the idea of an inclusive faith community. Additional copies of the video's accompanying booklet are available free of charge and could be distributed to each catechist/teacher. Allow people to express their concerns, share their experiences and ask questions.



2. Since all the lessons are based on the same Scripture passage, 1 Cor. 12:4-11, lead the group in a

reflection and discussion session using this passage.

Faith Sharing: Reflection and Discussion

- Begin with a prayer to the Holy Spirit.
 - Provide each person with a copy of the Scripture passage and have someone read it aloud.
 - Use the following questions for reflection and discussion:
 - a. What gifts do I bring to this parish school or religious education program? How do I contribute to the life of the Church?
 - b. What gifts do I see and appreciate in the people around me in this parish?
 - c. Why has this passage been chosen for a lesson on including people of all abilities in faith life?
 - d. What experiences have I had with people who have disabilities? How have I been a gift to one of them? How have people with disabilities been a gift to me or to someone I know?
3. Distribute copies of the lesson plans for intermediate, junior high and high school students to those catechists/teachers. Provide copies of the family lesson plan to all the catechists/teachers. Give

catechists/ teachers time to read the teacher guide and look over the student pages for their grade level.

4. Explain how you would like catechists/teachers to use these lessons, or have them help you decide when and how they should be used.

Helpful Resources

- **Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors**, 25-minute DVD (English, Spanish, Polish, captioned and descriptive versions on one DVD) featuring Joseph Cardinal Bernardin and Fr. Henri Nouwen - \$10. Free to principals, DREs and youth ministers who schedule a free presentation.
Pathways.org
355 E Erie St.
Chicago, IL 60611
- www.team-w.org
- **The Vulnerable Journey**, 50-minute DVD featuring Father Henri Nouwen speaking about the importance of including people of all abilities in church life - \$5.
Pathways.org

355 E Erie St.
Chicago, IL 60611
www.team-w.org

- **Courage Song**, Available as a CD single or as part of the “Starting Small” collection of songs by the late Bob Blue - \$15.
www.bobblue.org
- **Welcome One, Welcome All: Inclusive Education Resource Binder** - \$35
The Institute for Pastoral Initiatives
Attn. Margaret Shufflebarger
University of Dayton
Dayton, OH 45469-0314
888-532-3389 (voice)
937-229-3130 (fax)
www.udayton.edu/~ipi
Margaret.shufflebarger@notes.udayton.edu
- **Inclusive Catholic Schools Web Seminars**
National Catholic Partnership on Disabilities (NCPD)
415 Michigan Ave. NE
Suite 95
Washington, D.C. 20017
(voice)202-529-2933
www.ncpd.org

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